

with a stately bow while she returns the bow in the same way. Both now go to the sitting-room in which is prepared the "topekong" (house-altar), where they pray for a short time before the house-god and eat together some cakes which have been first offered to the spirits. This finished, the bridegroom and bride (who are now husband and wife) go to the bed-room; all the relations of the bridegroom are called together while the bride genuflects before her father and mother in-law. The parents of the bridegroom now make a present of a ring (sometimes money) and the other relations give money while the bride presents them with tea. The small tea-cups are carried on a tray by the bride herself, but as she must keep the fan always before her face, one of the women does that for her, while another woman goes round with her telling her to what new relation she is offering the tea. While the relations take the tea and put the present (money wrapped in red paper) on the tray, they generally say some kindly words to her. After these ceremonies are over, the dinner is served at which the bride is not allowed to be present and this is as usual followed by gambling.

Three days after, the mother of the bride sends some cocoanut oil and fowls,—which are carried by the younger brother of the bride,—to the bridegroom in order to prepare a small dinner and invite a few people. After this, the new couple visit the parents of the bride, while another small dinner is given by her parents, and on this occasion the bridegroom has to genuflect before his father and mother-in-law as it is the first time he enters the house as their son-in-law.

H. HEYDEN, M. Ap.

R. C. Mission,
Kuching.

The Prohibition of Deer's flesh among some of the Land-Dayaks.

The following notes do not pretend to be the result of any searching inquiry, but rather their object is to suggest a very interesting line of inquiry to anyone who

happens to be travelling or living among the Land-Dayaks.

Our inquiries—such as they are—lead us to conclude that generally speaking the Land-Dayaks are not allowed to eat deer's flesh. There are various exceptions to this rule and, as may be expected, all sorts of different stories and reasons are given to account for this restriction.

Beginning with the eastern district of the Sarawak Land-Dayaks, which comprises the land watered by the Sadong and Gedong rivers, out of the 44 villages of this district at two only do the entire population eat deer's flesh. At ten others only a few of the inhabitants eat deer; and at these villages the deer-eaters have certain restrictions put upon them.

Under no circumstances may they bring deer's flesh, raw or cooked, near a *bintang* (long dwelling-house) or *pancha* (head-house), whilst there is any kind of taboo in force, *e. g.* for the first clearing for paddy farms, for sickness, etc.

At other times deer's flesh, when cooked, may be brought into the *bintang*, but it must not be taken into the *bilek* (living-rooms), although it may be eaten in the *awa* (passage in front of the living-rooms).

Deer's flesh should never be taken up to a *pancha* where there is a *guna* (*i. e.* a collection of heads which are kept in the *pancha* and treated with the greatest respect. If any insult is offered to the heads, dire calamity is sure to fall on that house). It is true that the Dayaks do allow Malays and others to do so out of courtesy, and then only after it has been cooked. One of the writers of these notes remembers now the spectacle of a dignified grey-haired old Dayak standing at the foot of some steps leading up to the *pancha*, making courteous apologies for not allowing some freshly killed deer's flesh to be brought upstairs. "Let it be cooked outside first and then we do not mind if the Tuan likes to eat it upstairs," he requested, and of course we readily complied. It is no uncommon sight when the flesh is brought into their presence to see them immediately expectorate and show marked signs

of uneasiness, especially among the women-folk who seldom are found to touch it. With some tribes the prohibition of eating deer's flesh is particularly strict among the women, especially with young girls and virgins.

Against this last remark it should be noted that among the Land-Dayaks of Singghi, a village just off the Sarawak River, the women and boys only are allowed to partake of deer's flesh. Sir Hugh Low* has an interesting paragraph on these particular Dayaks with regard to this subject, and we were interested to hear from a Singghi the other day that the customs mentioned by Sir Hugh Low over 60 years ago are still observed strictly to-day.

To return to the eastern limit of the Land-Dayaks, we find a tribe called Melikin in the head-waters of the Gedong, a tributary of the Sadong, which appears to be the strictest in observing this prohibition. The writers could not hear of a single instance where any of these people have indulged in the forbidden "fruit". This is of exceptional interest because the Melikin Dayaks are on the borders of the Sea and Land-Dayak districts and consequently they have assimilated the customs and speech of both tribes, which are, as is well known, very different one from the other. The houses of this tribe are practically the same as the ordinary Sea-Dayak house, and they have no *pancha*. Deer's flesh is not allowed to be brought into their houses in any form. The Sea-Dayaks on the other hand have no

* "The prohibition against the flesh of deer is much less strictly practised, and in many tribes totally disregarded. In the large tribe of Singhie, it is observed in its fullest extent, and is even carried so far, that they will not allow a stranger to bring a deer into their houses, or to be cooked by their fires. The men of the tribe will not touch the animals, and none but the women or boys, who have not been on a war expedition, which admits them to the privileges of manhood, are allowed to assist the European sportsman in bringing home his bag.

"The tribe of Sow, whose villages are not far from the houses of Singhie, does not so rigorously observe the practice. Old men, women, and boys may eat of its flesh; the middle-aged and unmarried young men only being prohibited from partaking of it. I think, however, that the practice of using the flesh of the animal in question is one of recent introduction." (Sir Hugh Low, K. C. B. *Sarawak, its Inhabitants and Productions*. 1848, p. 266).

restrictions on this score, and they can eat deer's flesh with impunity.

One of the common explanations that have been offered to us is that the Dayaks are descended from deer and so will not eat them out of respect for their ancestors.

In support of this, a gentleman of Melikin related how one of his ancestors came across a deer sporting silver ear-rings as large as Mexican dollars; and this confirmed his belief that he is descended from this creature.

The Kujang Dayaks have a story that a man and woman of their village, both of whom had vowed never to marry, each dreamed they were to be turned into deer; so they exhorted their people henceforth to desist from eating deer's flesh, and warned them that whoever partook of this food would be turned into deer. The dream was fulfilled and to the present day these Dayaks maintain this warning holds good and that such will be the fate of those rash enough to disregard it.

Other Land Dayaks believe that those who consume deer's flesh become ill. The sickness taking the form of pains and swelling in the abdomen; finally the sufferer becomes childish and turns into a deer.

The Segoum Dayaks say there is a large white deer in their neighbourhood which it is impossible to shoot. When a gun is aimed at the beast the cap will not go off. Our readers must form their own conclusions as to why this should occur.

The Dayaks of Būnan tell of herds of white deer in their country. Both of these tribes abstain from deer's flesh. We have already mentioned that not only do certain tribes eat deer, but sometimes certain members of abstaining tribes will eat it, even though their relations and friends observe the restriction. And in such villages the non-abstainers may eat it in *panchas* that have no *guna*.*

The tribes on the Samarahan river seem to observe this restriction closely. Sir Spenser St. John confirms this and he further mentions this subject in respect to

* Every Land-Dayak village (except the Melikin Dayaks) has a *pancha* containing a *guna*, and many villages possess more than one *pancha*, sometimes two, three, or more, but not necessarily all containing *gunas*.

other Land-Dayak tribes † The Orang Kaya of Mungo Babi (Samarahan) explained after some hesitation, that the Dayaks believed they were descended from these animals and so were forbidden by their fathers to eat the flesh.

From the neighbouring village of Lanchang a different tale was offered, somewhat to this effect:—

In the beginning, Tuan Allah summoned before them a representative of each of the four races (*i. e.* representatives of the White men, the Chinese, the Malays and Dayaks); and ordered them to stand with their backs towards a flock of animals among which were deer, pig, cattle, etc. They were then told that whatever animals they could touch with a blowpipe (or spear) over their shoulder, those animals would be given to them and their descendants for food. The White man succeeded in touching all, and no animal flesh is forbidden him; the Malay however missed the pig, and so is allowed to eat deer and cattle but not pig; the Dayak touched them all except *rusa* and *kidjang* (deer), and so he is forbidden those animals. “Whether it is true or not,” continued our Land-Dayak informant, “I do not know, but still the Dayaks do not eat *rusa* or *kidjang* so I suppose it must be so”.

The Lanchang Dayaks, although strict observers of this prohibition, do not mind eating the *plandok* (Mouse-deer or Chevrotain). Some of the Dayaks of the Sadong district however will eat both *plandok* and *kidjang*. We can find no mention of this

† “The Dayaks of the Quop district do not refuse to eat deer. The custom of doing so, however obtains in Western Sarawak, but chiefly in the Singghi tribe, and then only among the young men. they do so because deer's flesh produces in those who eat it faint hearts; and as I have elsewhere observed, the interdict on certain kinds of food to the young people is merely selfishness on the part of the elders to secure to themselves a greater share of the articles that are not plentiful. The Silakau and Lara Dayaks who have emigrated from Sambas into Lundu, do not eat the flesh of the deer, from an opinion that they are descended from Dayak ancestors, but Mr. Chalmers, in his experience of the Sarawak Land-Dayak, never heard of any prejudice existing against killing or even eating any animals except the faint-heartedness supposed to be produced by venison.” Sir Srenser St. John. *Life in the Forests of the Far East*. 1863 [2nd Ed.] (Vol. I. p. 206.)

“They (deer) were represented as very numerous, as the Bukars do not eat their flesh.” (*Ibid.* p. 223).

“We inquired about the deer-grounds, but as these Dayaks (San Poks) are partial to venison, there was no game to be found in the neighbourhood.” (*Ibid.* p. 236).

distinction by any of the numerous writers on the Land-Dayaks, and our own notes are unfortunately very meagre on the point, so we leave it with the suggestion that further inquiries would be of great interest.

The wily Malay traders whose rations often comprise pieces of dried deer are not slow to impose on the simple Dayak. They inform the Dayaks they are eating fried monkey, boiled bear or dried crocodile—anything in fact they know the Dayaks relish. Thus the Dayak is inveigled into partaking of a meal whose true nature, if he knew it, would cause him no little uneasiness.

A Malay, if he learns that the *guna* in the *pancha*, at which he intends to pass a night or two, is *pengaru besa* (= lit. "very powerful" or perhaps it could be translated "very holy"), would not dare to bring up any deer's flesh, fearing ill-luck would befall him; so superstitious are they.

Many Dayaks do not care about handling the *rusa* (deer) and will drag a dead beast by means of a long rotan rope to wherever they wish to deposit it. Although some Dayaks eat deer they are very shy in mentioning the fact keeping the matter as quiet as possible for fear it should come to the ears of their women-folk when their chances of marriage might be seriously impaired.

The restriction is rare among Bornean tribes and we believe it is practically only observed by the Land-Dayaks. † The custom is interesting as suggesting a survival of a former Hindu influence; though we would observe that the Dayaks do not hesitate to slay the deer, who do considerable damage to their rice farms and gardens.

F. F. BOULT.

J. C. MOULTON.

Sarawak,
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† Dr. C. Hose states that, "the Kayans do not eat deer" (*Journ. Anthrop. Instit.* 1894, XXIII. p. 159).

The Muriks.

These people are an increasing tribe living about 40 miles above the Government Station at Claudetown on the main Baram River.

They appear to be an extraordinary conglomeration of Kenyah, Kalabit and Kayan. According to their own history they originally came from the Bahau River in Dutch Borneo, and were probably part of the original Kelamantan inhabitants of that district, but were driven inland by the Kenyah tribes, Leppu Maut, Leppu Keh, etc. They then moved over into the Balong River, a tributary of the Ulu Baram, and gradually came further down-river to Long Semiang, where they came in touch with the Kayans, who were pushing over into Baram from the Batang Kayan. They made a close connection with the Kayans, which led to the introduction of a lot of Kayan words into their language. After being nearly exterminated by the great epidemic of small-pox in about 1875, they moved into the Selaan River amongst the Kayans, where they were attacked with great slaughter by the Leppu Teppus from the Batang Kayan, and those who escaped settled at their present village at Long Tamalla. They claim close relationship with such Kenyah Kelamantans as the Long Akar, Long Sibatu and Long Ulai tribes, and most of their customs are similar to this division of the Kelamantan race. Their religion consists of a belief in the usual numerous deities of the Kenyah mythology reigned over by the supreme god, Bali Peselong. These deities live in a separate heaven from that to which the souls of mortals go and the locality of it is unknown,——probably in the sky.

Long Kendi is the name of the heaven to which the souls of mankind go, and all go there with the exception of those who have been killed in warfare, and of women who have died in childbirth. Long Kendi is ruled by Iju Ipoi, a semi-deity, and no work is done there; the paddy grows of its own accord and every-